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Cuba Prisoner Swap By Christmas Sought

Donovan Is Optimistic On Quick Return Of
Invaders As Red Cross Joins Effort

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New York, Dec. 13 (AP)—James B. Donovan, encouraged by President Kennedy and joined by the American Red Cross, said today he hopes to win freedom for Cuban invasion prisoners by Christmas.

The Cuban missile crisis had stalled his efforts to swap medicines, medical supplies and baby food to Premier Fidel Castro for release of the 1,113 invaders held in Cuban prisons.

No Cash Involved

Castro had demanded \$62,000,000 ransom, but Donovan said no cash is involved.

"I'm optimistic of being able to accomplish this (swap) by Christmas," said Donovan, the Wall Street attorney who arranged the exchange of Col. Rudolf Abel, Soviet master spy, for American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers.

"We have had to wait until we got assurance that what was being done was in no way inconsistent with national policy," Donovan said. Mr. Kennedy gave that assurance at a news conference

yesterday when he endorsed Donovan's objectives.

Today, the Red Cross announced in Washington that it was participating in seeking the release of the men captured at the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961. Donovan said this support gives "tremendous impetus" to the movement.

Supplies Being Collected

The Red Cross said it was collecting supplies from United States manufacturers for shipment to Cuba and would provide welfare services to any Cuban prisoners released to the United States.

Donovan entered into the talks with Castro in behalf of the Cuban Families Committee for Liberation of Prisoners of War, Inc. He made several trips to Havana for negotiations.

He said when it appeared necessary to return to Havana to accomplish the release "I will leave immediately."

The Red Cross also said it will provide welfare services to the prisoners upon their return to the United States, assuming the Donovan negotiations are successful.

The Red Cross statement said:

"At the request of the Cuban Families Committee (for Liberation of Prisoners of War, Inc.) and in keeping with its traditional role as an organization concerned with the welfare of people in distress throughout the world, the American National Red Cross is accepting donations of baby and similar foodstuffs, medicines, and

medical supplies from manufacturers in the United States for shipment to Cuba.

"These gifts will be made available to the Cuban Families Committee whose representative, Mr. James B. Donovan, is endeavoring to obtain the release of the prisoners captured by the Castro regime after the Bay of Pigs episode in April, 1961.

"By Air And Ship"

"The American National Red Cross agreed to make available its facilities to receive the donations and assist in their shipment to Cuba.

"These materials are appropri-

ate for use in caring for the ill and in feeding the very young in that country. The food and medicines will be shipped by air and ship.

"When the released prisoners return to the United States, the American National Red Cross is prepared to provide its normal welfare services such as canteen service, communications with relatives who have been resettled in various communities, comfort kits, and clothing.

"Some of these services have been provided as part of the regular reception program which has been going on for some time."